United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Security Council, in Presidential statement, deplores "renewed and rising cycle of violence" in southern Lebanon and elsewhere in the region, particularly recent killings; urges all concerned to exercise "maximum restraint".

- Security Council welcomes Secretary-General's decision to sent special mission to Iraq to seek unconditional agreement to implement all obligations under cease-fire resolution and to stress serious consequences if such agreement is not forthcoming.

- In opening statement at anti-apartheid committee meeting, Secretary-General says it is now possible to envisage "new society" in South Africa "which respects human rights".

- While in Iran on week-long visit in pursuit of peaceful settlement of Afghan question, Secretary-General's Personal Representative for that region meets with Iranian, Pakistani and Central Asian leaders, as well as with Afghan resistance leaders in Iran.

- Italy offers to host 1993 World Summit on Human Rights.

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The Security Council met this afternoon in a formal meeting at the request of Lebanon which had asked for an urgent convening of the Council in response to recent developments.

In a Presidential statement at the meeting, Council President Thomas R. Pickering of the United States said Council members were deeply concerned about the "renewed and rising cycle of violence in southern Lebanon and elsewhere in the region". The Council deplored in particular the recent killings and the continued violence which threatened to claim additional lives and to destabilize the region further.

By the statement, the members of the Council called upon all parties involved to exercise maximun restraint in order to bring the violence to an

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end. They reaffirmed their commitment to the full sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries, as set out in resolution 425 (1978). They asserted that "any State shall refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations".

The Council expressed its continued support for all efforts to bring peace to the region and urged all the parties concerned to work vigorously to enhance the ongoing peace process.

In the letter requesting the urgent convening of the Council, the Lebanese Permanent Representative, Khalil Makkawi, had cited "the latest acts of aggression by Israel against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon and its continuous occupation of southern Lebanon and part of the Bekaa". Mr. Makkawi said the aggressions and occupation constituted a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter and Security Council resolutions and posed a "grave threat" to international peace and security.

The letter, which was addressed to the Council President, was dated 17 February. (S/23604)

In a related development, the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Ilter Türkmen, has issued a statement deploring Israeli air raids on two Palestine refugee camps in southern Lebanon in the early hours of Sunday, 16 February.

According to the statement, the bombings of the Ein el Hilweh and the Rashidieh camps, which house respectively 34,000 and 20,000 Palestinian refugees, had killed four civilians and wounded ten.

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Members of the Security Council have endorsed a proposal by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali that a special mission, headed by the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission on Iraqi Disarmament, Rolf Ekeus, be dispatched to Iraq immediately.

The mission will meet with high-level representatives of the Iraqi Government with the view of securing its unconditional agreement to implement all its obligations under resolution 687 (1991), which set the conditions for the cease-fire in the Gulf war.

The Secretary-General's proposal was submitted to the Security Council together with the Special Commission's latest report on Iraqi compliance with resolutions 707 and 715 (1991) during Council consultations yesterday. In its report, the Commission called for "firm action" by the Council, noting that if such action was delayed, in the face of Iraq's repeated refusal to acknowledge any obligations under those resolutions, "the more intransigent the Government's position is likely to become".

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In a Presidential statement issued today, members of the Council said Iraq's failure to acknowledge its obligations under resolutions 707 (1191) and 715 (1991); its rejection of ongoing monitoring and verification; and its failure to provide the full, final and complete disclosure of its weapons capabilities constituted a continuing material breach of the relevant provisions of the cease-fire resolution.

The statement called for the unconditional agreement by Iraq to implement those obligations, saying it was one of the essential preconditions for the Council to reconsider the prohibitions imposed on the country. The Council urged the mission to stress to the Iraqi Government the serious consequences that will ensue if such agreement is not forthcoming.

By its statement, the Council asked the Secretary-General to report back to the Council on the results of the special mission when it returns.

In related news today, the Secretary-General has appointed Ambassador Michael H. Newlin (United States) as Deputy Executive Chairman of the Special Commission on Iraqi disarmament. He is replacing Robert L. Gallucci, who has been recalled by his Government.
(S/23606)

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The system of apartheid in South Africa was crumbling under the combined pressure of internal and external forces, and it was now possible to envisage a new society in South Africa -- one which respected human rights, did not discriminate on grounds of colour, sex, religion or political affiliation, and in which all shared economic wealth. That was stated by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali yesterday, as he opened the first meeting of the Special Committee Against Apartheid at Headquarters.

The Secretary-General went on to say that courageous political steps had been taken in South Africa in the past two years; among them were the repeal of major apartheid laws and the repatriation of exiles. The launching of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa had marked a new stage in the political life of the country, he said. The presence of the United Nations at that Convention last December signified its full support for the process.

Among others addressing the Committee, the re-elected Chairman, Ibrahim A. Gambari of Nigeria, urged that restrictions on oil and arms be maintained until a new constitution was adopted and a democratically elected government installed in South Africa. During the next few months, he said, the Special Committee would closely monitor developments in South Africa, paying particular attention to the underlying causes of violence and issuing early warnings if necessary.

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The Secretary-General's Personal Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Bonon Sevan, has returned to Pakistan from a week-long visit to

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Iran, in connection with his talks with leaders of the region on a peaceful settlement of the Afghan question.

While in Teheran, Mr. Sevan met with Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Alaedin Bourujerdi, and other senior officials. He also met with the Afghan resistance leaders of the Iran-based Hezb-e-Wahdat and with commanders of resistance from western Afghanistan whom he briefed on the plans to convene a gathering ("Ijlas") of Afghans outside the region. Such a gathering would seek the agreement of the parties to a transition mechanism, leading to the establishment of a government through free and fair elections.

Mr. Sevan also met with the Foreign Ministers of Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, as well as the President of the Parliament of Uzbekistan, who all expressed the support of their respective Governments for a peaceful settlement of the Afghan settlement. He reiterated the Secretary-General's call to all Governments concerned to halt not only the supply of arms to all sides but also the financing of arms purchases. In response, the three Central Asian leaders gave assurances that no such arms tranfers were taking place.

Throughout his visit to Iran, Mr. Sevan's interlocutors expressed deep anxieties about growing ethnic tensions inside Afghanistan. Last week in Kabul, the Personal Representative warned that "if a political solution to the Afghan question is not found within the current year, there is a real threat that the territorial integrity of Afghanistan will be irreparably shattered".

Before his departure from Teheran, Mr. Sevan paid tribute to the Government and people of Iran both for the generosity shown to the almost three million Afghan refugees over the past thirteen years, and for their continued support for the Secretary-General's efforts.

The Personal Representative met in Teheran also with the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mian Nawaz Sharif, and the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Siddique Khan Kanju.

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Italy has announced that it is willing to host the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights. The offer came yesterday in Geneva where the Commission on Human Rights is currently holding its forty-eighth session, following an announcement by the German Government that it was unable to meet the requirements for the hosting of the Conference.

The Human Rights Commission will be meeting through 6 March.

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